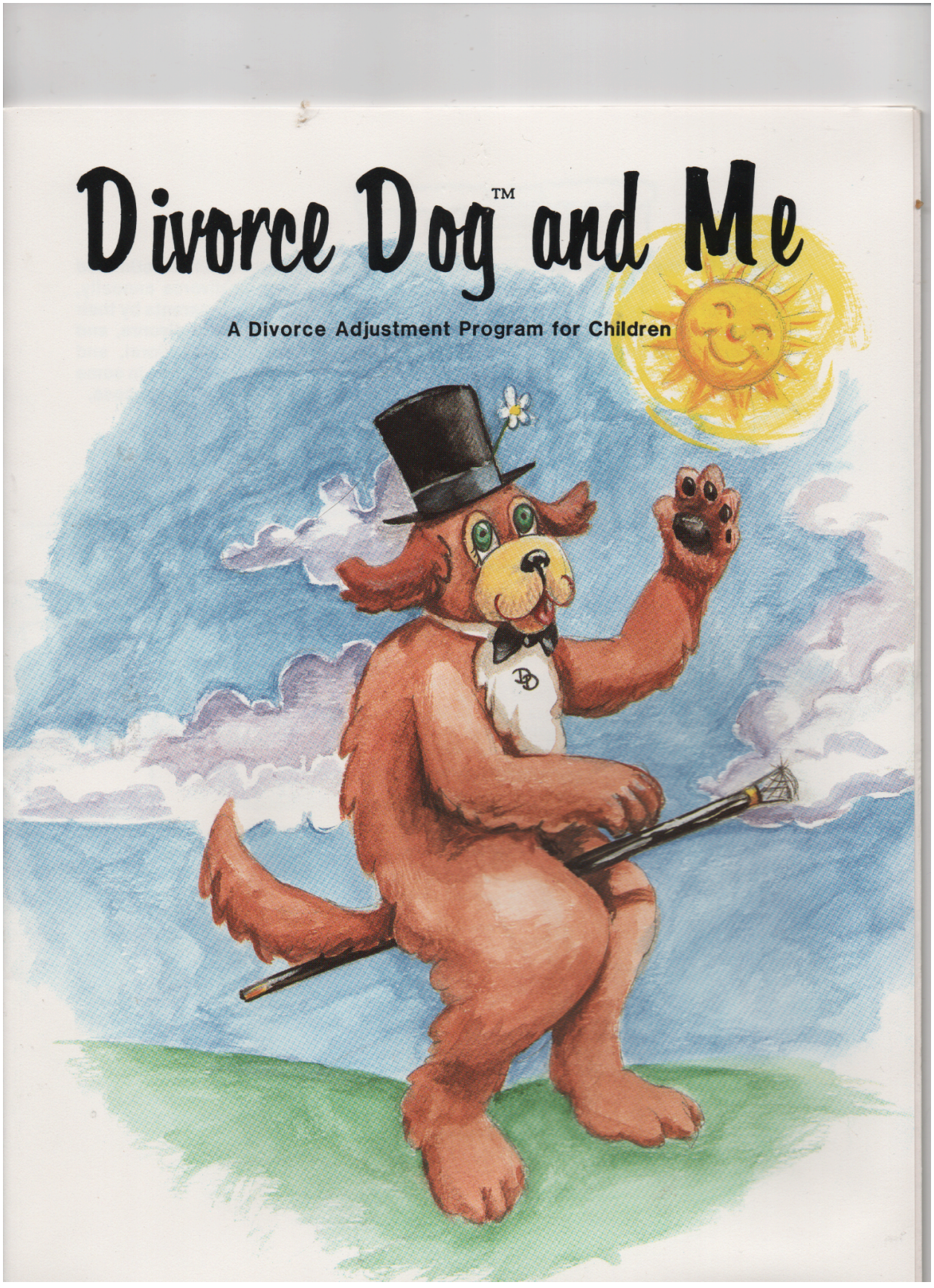
# Divorce Dog™ and Me

A Divorce Adjustment Program for Children



**Since 1960 the divorce rate in the United States has nearly tripled. It is estimated that over 1 million children experience parental separation or divorce annually, and 4 out of every 10 children will experience the break-up of their parents by their 15th birthday. Research studies have consistently related marital divorce, and particularly marital conflict, to children's emotional, social, behavioral, and educational problems. It is our sincere hope that Divorce Dog and Me can in some way help the children of divorce to understand and begin the healing process.**


## Acknowledgments

John Eastwood as Divorce Dog
Charlene Sinclair as Mother
Kjirsten Frank as Jill
Gina Smith as Karen
Mike Dean as Dan
Rebecca Harris as Mandy
Elizabeth Sinclair as Cristy
Josh Hufziger as Brad

Other voices: Amy Porter and Molly Porter

Produced by: Richard Todd-Audio Communication
Kettering, Ohio

Illustrated by: Donna Hrkman

Printed by: Schuerholz Graphics

Copyright © ℗ 1988 Ronald J. Sinclair, Ph.D., and Charlene H. Sinclair, All rights reserved, Illustrations copyright ©1988 Ronald J. Sinclair, Ph.D. Divorce Dog™ is a trademark of Ronald J. Sinclair, Ph.D.

No part of this book or audio program may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or recording without the prior written permission of the Publisher.



For more information about this publication, please contact:
Dr. Ronald Sinclair
P. O. Box 2716
Dayton, Ohio 45401

(Printed in U.S.A.)

**Divorce is Hard to Understand**

I'll Bet You Are Feeling a Bit Frightened, Right?

Divorce is Not Your Fault

There are a Lot of Kids From Divorced Families

Accept the Divorce and Make the Best of It

Even if Parents Get Divorced, They Still Love You

I Promise to Try!

Draw Yourself with Divorce Dog

## How Parents Can Help

- Children often think that if one parent left the home, the other parent may leave too. **Do** reassure your child that you will continue to love and care for him or her.

- Children often refuse to accept their parents' divorce, especially in the initial stages. **Do** gently, but consistently, remind your child that the divorce is a reality. Your child's acceptance of the divorce is one of the first steps in the adjustment process.

- During the initial stages of the divorce, children are often so affected by the conflict and stress that they are forced to assume adult roles. **Do** make sure that your child is able to be a child—play like a child, laugh like a child, and assume the carefree attitude of a child. **Don't** draw your child into the conflict of the divorce or confide in your child about adult matters. Above all, **Don't** directly or indirectly ask your child to "take sides".

- When parents divorce, children often feel that they are somehow to blame. Some chidren feel that if they had behaved better, been smarter, etc. that the divorce would not have occured. **Do** consistently reassure your child that he or she is not to blame for the divorce. Explain to your child that you are getting divorced for grown up reasons that have nothing to do with him or her. **Do** reassure your child that you love him or her.

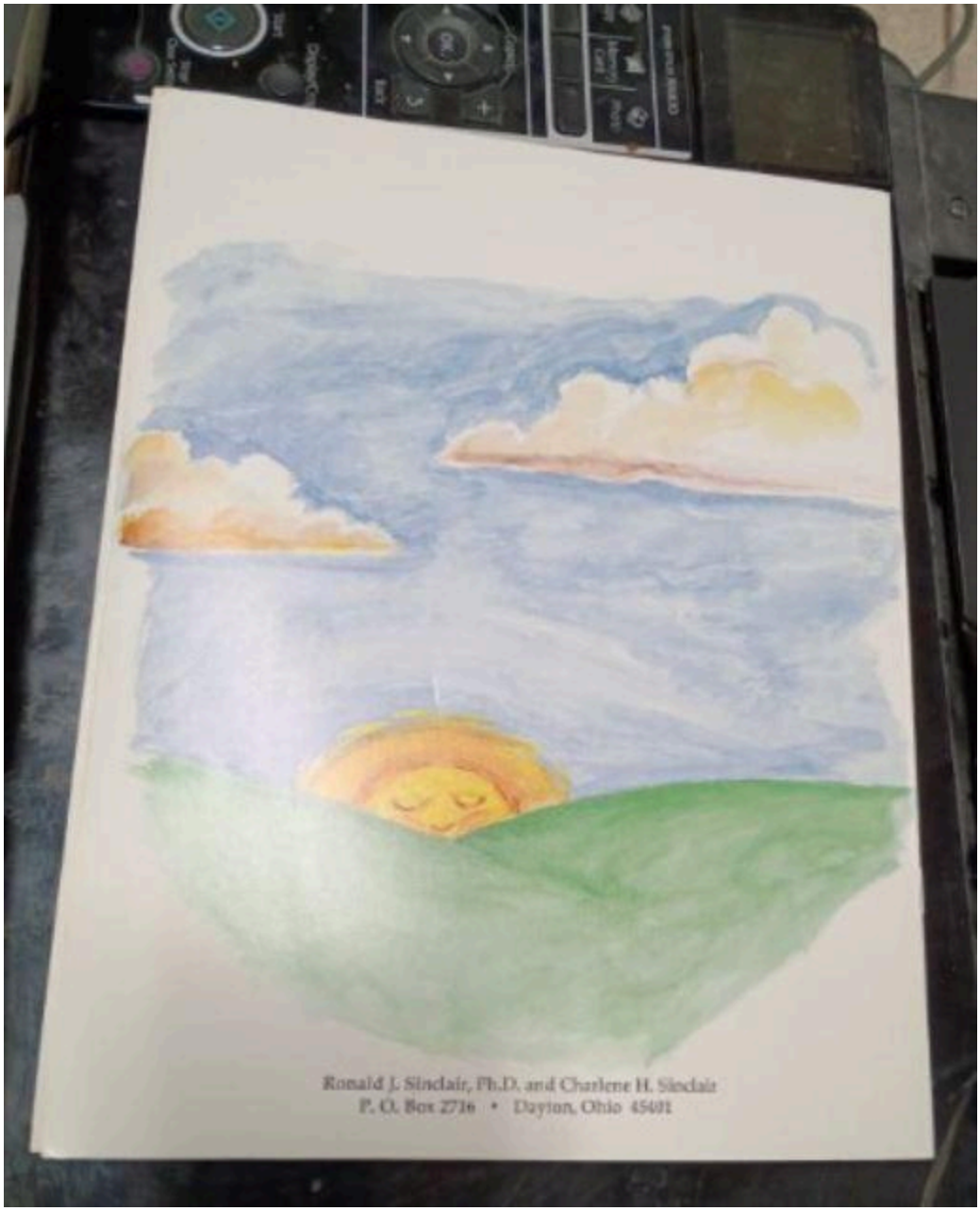
- When children experience parental divorce, they suffer a great deal of loss. They may lose contact with one parent, as well as friends and relatives. Family routines are disrupted, and children may be forced to change homes and schools. **Do** allow your child to have regular contact with the absent parent, as well as friends and relatives. **Do** try to establish new family routines as soon as possible, and **Do** talk with your child and acknowledge the sadness and pain associated with change and loss.

- Children may feel anger towards one or both parents because of the divorce. **Do** allow your child to express anger about the divorce situation. However, if this anger continues over an extended period of time, **Do** arrange for your child to talk with a mental health professional.

- Children may fantasize for years that their parents will get back together and the family will be reunited. This fantasy may persist even after one or both parent remarries. **Do** remind your child that the divorce is permanent and he or she needs to accept things as they are.

- Children who are placed in the middle of the divorce conflict may experience the most harm. **Do** be cordial with your former spouse when your child is present. **Don't** talk negatively to your child about the other parent or let your child over-hear you talking negatively about the other parent to friends or relatives. Above all, **Don't** use visitation or child support issues as weapons against your former spouse.

- **Do** remember that husbands and wives get divorced from each other, but they will always be fathers and mothers to their children. Chidren are your most precious assets from the marriage, **Don't** emotionally destroy them during the stressful divorce process. **Do** put your children first!


Ronald J. Sinclair, Ph.D. and Charlene H. Sinclair
P. O. Box 2716 • Dayton, Ohio 45401